



NATIONAL CONVENTION OF LSOs 2016



Sindh Union Council and Community Economic Strengthening Support Programme
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Sindh Union Council and Community Economic Strengthening Support (SUCCESS) Programme



SUCCESS

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Overview

In order to promote the work of the community institutions fostered by the Rural Support Programmes (RSPs) across the country, and to advocate their work and achievements to broader set of set of stakeholders, including policy makers, government authorities, donor agencies, non-government organisations (NGOs), and other stakeholders, the Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN) organised a National Convention of Local Support Organisations (LSOs) 2016 in Karachi, on August 23, 2016. The Convention was attended by around 260 participants, including over 100 LSO representatives from all provinces and regions of Pakistan, and representatives from the provincial government representatives, European Union Delegation (EUD) to Pakistan, donors, media, and international and national NGOs.

The Chief Guest at the Convention, Minister Planning and Development, Government of Sindh Mir Hazar Khan Bijarani, valued the RSPs' approach to community driven development, and believed that this approach and the SUCCESS Programme would contribute to improve the lives and livelihoods of the poor people as well as to strengthen democracy at the grassroots level. He assured that the Government of Sindh will contribute as much as it can to achieve poverty alleviation and economic empowerment.

Among other notable participants at the Convention were Head of Rural Development and Economic Cooperation-EU Delegation to Pakistan, Dr. Amaury Hoste, Development Advisor for Rural Development and Nutrition, EU Delegation to Pakistan, Mr. Georges Dehoux, Additional Chief Secretary Punjab, Mr. Shamail Ahmad Khwaja, Secretary (Development), Planning and Development, Government of Sindh, Ms. Rehana Ghulam Ali Memon, and Chairman RSPN, Mr. Shoaib Sultan Khan.

Selected LSO leaders made presentation on their work, achievements, lessons learnt and challenges faced. The Convention provided an opportunity for cross-learning as well as for strengthening advocacy efforts. The panellists at the Convention stressed on fostering and strengthening community institutions so that this social pillar is enabled to complement government's political and administrative pillars. There was also unanimity of view that the government should devise local level development policy and allocate budget so that the community institutions role and functions are mainstreamed so that they can contribute to reducing poverty at the household level.

Proceeding of the Workshop

Welcome Note and Introduction of Participants

The session began with a recitation from the Holy Quran by Mr. Mohammad Ali Azizi, Specialist Social Mobilisation RSPN followed by a round of participants' introductions conducted by the moderator, Dr. Abdur Rahman Cheema, Team Lead-Research RSPN.

To set the tone of the convention, a short documentary was shown prepared by Serendip Productions entitled Mehnaz's Story. Mehnaz is a member of a Community Organisation (CO) in district Shikarpur, and she narrates how her and her community's lives have changed through social mobilisation undertaken by the Sindh Rural Support Organisation under the government of Sindh (SRSO) supported Union Council Based Poverty Reduction Programme (UCBPRP). The documentary truly depicted the positive impact of the SRSO's social mobilisation at the household and community levels.

Mr. Khaleel Ahmed Tetlay, Chief Operating Officer RSPN, began by formally introducing the National Convention of LSOs 2016 and welcoming the participants. He provided a brief history of the RSPs approach and how the movement began from one small village in the mountains of Gilgit, and has now scaled up across the country. He talked about the change social mobilisation has brought about and that over 360,000 COs, representing 6.5 million member households and a population of 38 million, have been established so far. He also said that while Pakistan has 5,565 rural Union Councils, RSPs have fostered 1,260 LSOs.

Session I: RSPs Approach to Community-Driven Economic and Social Development

The moderator, Dr. Abdur Rehman Cheema outlined the objective to the session which was to understand the need and importance of social mobilisation and community institutions (COs/VOs/LSOs) of the rural poor.

The panellists for the session included the Chief Guest of the session, Ms. Kulsume Hai, Deputy Secretary Economic Affairs Division, Dr. Amaury Hoste, Head of Rural Development and Economic Cooperation-EU Delegation to Pakistan, Mr. Mohammad Ali Khoso, Coordinator UCBPRP, Government of Sindh, Ms. Alia Shahid, Special Secretary Education, Government of Sindh, and Mr. Shoaib Sultan Khan, Chairman RSPN.

Mr. Shoaib Sultan Khan, Chairman RSPN welcomed the participants and gave a brief overview of the work RSPs do. To clarify the misconceptions about RSPs work, Mr. Shoaib said that the state has two pillars: i) administrative pillar and ii) political pillar. These two pillars cannot reach out to the household level, where poverty exists. Without reaching out to the poor households and organising them household poverty cannot be reduced. Therefore, the core function of RSPs is to reach out to poor households and mobilise them into their own organisations, i.e. Community Organisations (COs), Village Organisations (VOs) and Local Support Organisations



Panelists of Session I: RSPs Approach to Community-Driven Economic and Social Development

(LSOs). These are people's own organisations and they represent the third pillar, the social pillar. State pillars can work with this social pillar to effectively reach out to poor households. The fundamental belief of the RSP approach is that every household has the potential to improve their own lives and livelihoods, yet they face constraints. When they are organised, then some of these constraints can be reduced through RSP support and the process of improvement begins. He said that the Heads of States of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, in early 1990s, accepted that social mobilisation should be the centrepiece for poverty reduction in all South Asian countries.

The welcome note was followed by the first presentation on enterprise development by LSO Sartyoon, Shikarpur, Sindh. The LSO was fostered by COs and VO in 2012 with the support of SRSO. . The LSO gave a brief overview of its profile and talked about its achievements so far in enterprise development, particularly highlighting the role of women managed micro enterprises.

The presentation was then followed by a short video on the European Union funded Sindh Union Council & Community Economic Strengthen Support (SUCCESS) Programme. The video briefed the participants about the programme, its objectives, and its outreach in eight districts of Sindh and its expected results and impacts.

Dr. Amaury Hoste, Head of Rural Development and Economic Cooperation-EU Delegation to Pakistan welcomed and thanked the guests for coming from all over the country and paid thanks to RSPN for organising the event. Dr. Hoste said that over the past five years, the EU has increasingly worked with the RSPs across most of Pakistan and currently RSPs remain the EU's main implementing partners. Over the last 5 years EU has committed EUR 350 million to finance rural development programs in Pakistan, most of these funds being implemented by the RSPs.

The RSPs have proved that they can have a huge impact on the living standards of people, and that the LSOs have a key role to play in the CDD approach to rural development for three main reasons: i) LSOs are the voice of the people as they represent them through their COs and VO; ii) LSOs must be an interface in the relationships with potential development partners; and iii) importantly, if we want to take this whole community mobilisation to another level, LSOs must become a cornerstone of the dialogue that must take place between government



Dr. Amaury Hoste, Head of Rural Development and Economic Cooperation-EU Delegation to Pakistan, giving a speech at the Convention

representatives at the local level, local elected bodies, and the general population. Such a dialogue is necessary to ensure accountability that decision-makers are aware of the needs of the people on the ground and that the policies/programmes will match those needs. In this context, it is important for the local government and authorities not to see LSOs as a competition but to acknowledge that they can be a part of the development process.

Dr. Hoste also thanked the Government of Sindh for providing constant commitment and financial support to community driven local development. From a pilot phase, the GoS funded Union Council Based Poverty Reduction Programme has gradually extended its scope to cover more districts of Sindh. In early 2014, GoS requested the EU to assist in extending the geographical coverage of their intervention. As a result of which the EU approved the SUCCESS programme, which is now operational in eight districts. Dr. Hoste also said that by the end of 2017, the EU is looking to start three new projects in: i) improving land tenancy, ii) combatting malnutrition, and iii) facilitating economic growth in rural areas.

Dr. Hoste concluded his remarks by highlighting the importance of the role of citizens for the betterment of the lives of people in Pakistan as well as for reinforcing social coherence.

Following Dr. Amaury's remarks, each panellist gave brief remarks. Mr. Mohammad Ali Khoso, Coordinator UCBPRP GoS, said that UCBPRP is launching the programme in six more districts of Sindh, and thanked and complimented the EU for launching the SUCCESS programme for playing a meaningful role for social mobilisation for the economic and social empowerment of the rural poor.

Ms. Aliya Shahid, Special Secretary Education, GoS, appreciated EU's support and said that the real potential is with the people of Pakistan, and only they can break the cycle of poverty at the household level. She urged the LSO participants to be more proactive and join hands with local authorities for addressing local development issues.

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Mr. Shumail Khwaja, Additional Chief Secretary, Government of the Punjab, thanked Mr. Shoaib Sultan Khan and the team for arranging and facilitating the LSO Convention, and for inviting him. This Convention is a great learning opportunity. Mr. Khwaja said that until partnerships of government with the people are ensured, economic and social improvements in rural areas cannot be achieved and poverty cannot be reduced. He said that the government of the Punjab (GoP) is currently



Mr. Shumail Ahned Khwaja, Additional Chief Secretary Punjab, giving remarks at the Convention

considering a proposal of RSPN to pilot a similar programme to UCBPRP in a few districts of the province, and after testing the pilot, the GoP will be keen to upscale it. Mr. Khwaja said that the GoP has already conceived a number of programmes under its policy framework such as Sustainable Development Programme, Clean Water Programme, where the role of community is present. The gains of such an approach are significant. The RSPs approach leads to not only social mobilisation but also social and economic empowerment. He invited RSPN to hold such conventions often and in other parts of the country, including Punjab.

Giving closing remarks of the session, the Chief Guest of the session, Ms. Kulsume Hai, Deputy Secretary, Economic Affairs Division appreciated the effort being done by RSPs all over the country, especially with the EU funded programmes. She said that developing social capital is



Ms. Kulsume Hai, Deputy Secretary EA,D Chief Guest of the inaugural session giving remarks

essential for the development of the country and seconded Dr. Hoste's comment by emphasizing on the development of a legal framework for partnership between the social pillar and the administrative pillar. She also said that Federal government will give all the support it can to the pilot project proposed by GoP with RSPN in Punjab. Ms. Hai concluded her remarks by saying, "poverty cannot be defined, it can only be felt. Taking care of others is truly what our success is."

Session II: Experience of the Community Institutions (COs/VOs/LSOs) in Promoting Economic Empowerment of Local Communities

The moderator, Ms. Marvi Ahmed, M&E Officer RSPN, shared the objective of the second session, which was to recognise the value and contribution of Community Institutions (CO/VO/LSOs) in the economic empowerment of local communities. The session panellists included the Chief Guest for the event, Minister Planning and Development, GoS, Mir Hazar Khan Bijarani, Head of Rural Development and Economic Cooperation-EU Delegation to Pakistan, Dr. Amaury Hoste, Additional Chief Secretary Punjab, Mr. Shamail Ahmed Khwaja, Chairperson TRDP Mr. Naseer Nizamani, Assistant Commissioner Larkana, Mr. Sajjad Qadri, Development Advisor for Rural Development and Nutrition, EU Delegation to Pakistan, Mr. Georges Dehoux, Mr. Member BoD SRSO, Mr. Fazalullah Qureshi, and Chairman RSPN, Mr. Shoaib Sultan Khan.

The session commenced by a presentation by Ms. Huma Beg, Founder of Ministry of Change. Ms. Beg gave a brief overview of the organisation and told the audience that her organisation's objective is to allow the people of Pakistan to voice their opinions. Ministry of Change is an e-based platform for change that empowers people in Pakistan to engage in projects financially, physically and socially. Ms. Beg encouraged all LSOs to register with her organisation.

Following Ms. Beg's presentation, the LSO presentations started. The first presentation was by LSO Miani, Bahawalpur, on livelihood improvements and economic empowerment of local communities. NRSP supported local COs and VO's to set up LSO Miani. Representative of LSO Miani spoke about their achievements and shared their experiences. The LSO was formed in 2010, and has since disbursed assets to 544 poor families (529 women & 15 men) for livelihood improvement, provided skill trainings to 597 members including 458 women and 39 men, and has established Nokari ya Karobar (work or enterprise) centre and facilitated employment opportunities to 67 men in different job places. Their main areas of work in UC Miani are livestock sector, education, health, and WASH. The LSO has also provided support to 693



Panellists of Session II: Experience of the Community Institutions (COs/VOs/LSOs) in Promoting Economic Empowerment of Local Communities

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beneficiaries through the self-managed Community Revolving Fund (CRF). These beneficiaries have set their micro enterprises.

The next presentation, on youth employability, was by LSO Biyar, from district Chitral, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, established in 2006 by AKRSP. The LSO has worked for disaster and risk management, harmony and peace in the community, and their youth development initiatives include: youth development plan; youth population assessment survey; youth inclusion workshops in



Presentation by LSO Miani

community institutions; developing leadership and management skills; building their skill and business development capacities; youth internship programme; organizing sports and cultural festivals; and establishment of youth resource centres.

The next presentation was on Micro Hydro Plants (MHPs) by LSO Miandam, district Swat, KP, formed in 2015 by the Sarhad Rural Support Organisation (SRSP) under the EU funded PEACE Programme. The LSO has worked for water rehabilitation schemes in the area, and under the PEACE Programme have installed six MHPs benefitting 420 households. These MHPs are managed and maintained by the organised communities.

The presentations were followed by remarks from Mr. Sajjad Qadri who appreciated the efforts being made by RSPs in the development of the country. Mr. Qadri also highlighted the importance of agriculture and livestock in the lives and livelihoods of rural people and emphasised that these two sectors should be given more importance.

During the session, the Minister of Planning and Development Department, GoS, joined the convention as the Chief Guest of the event. Mr. Shoaib Sultan Khan, and Dr. Amaury Hoste, welcomed the Minister to the event.

Mr. Shoaib Sultan Khan welcoming the Minister and gave a brief overview of his time in the government and lauded Mr. Qaim Ali Shah for adopting RSP the approach to CDD in Kashmore and Shikarpur districts through UCBPRP. These two districts responded to the opportunity in such a way that the programme is being expanded in Sindh like nowhere else in Pakistan.

Dr. Amaury also welcomed and thanked the Minister for joining the event. Dr. Hoste emphasised on the key role that LSOs play in the development process and in relationship with the local authorities. He believed that from the perspective of EU, a dialogue between LSOs, local elected bodies and local authorities is necessary to assure that the decision-makers are aware of the needs of the people. He also asserted that the local government should not see LSOs as competition or as rivals for funding but develop full partnership and acknowledge the

value that they can bring. The EU currently has funded SUCCESS Programme based on the UCBPRP approach and wants to continue working further with RSPs in Pakistan.

A representative of LSO Mehran, from district Kahsmore Kandkot, Sindh, presented on economic empowerment of rural poor households through three-tier social mobilisation. The LSO was formed in 2012 under the Union Council Based Poverty Reduction Programme (UCBPRP) of GoS and SRSO, and gave an overview of the positive experience under the programme including significant contributions to improve the lives of rural poor.



Presentation by LSO Mehran

A representative of LSO Saian Kopra, from district Sialkot, Punjab, presented next on the experience of the Community Institutions (COs/VOs/LSOs) in promoting economic empowerment of local communities. The LSO was established in 2011 under a programme by Punjab Rural Support Programme (PRSP), and has been working for social sector interventions, physical infrastructure development, and capacity building through vocational training, micro credit and internal lending.

The presentations were followed by remarks by Additional Chief Secretary Punjab, Mr. Shamail Ahmad Khwaja. Mr. Khwaja said that the role of LSOs, RSPs, and social mobilisation is very reassuring and he has complete faith in the potential of people, provided the potential is unleashed towards empowerment and development. He appreciated the progress that the LSOs presented and claimed that their achievements were noteworthy. He emphasised on promoting the role of women and the youth in the development process at the local level. Mr. Khwaja also said that we need to have a new public policy paradigm by realigning development policies that allow for RSPs, civil society, donors and the people's own institutions to play their due roles and perform important functions for the economic and social benefit of poor households. Mr. Khwaja concluded by saying that GoP is planning to launch first phase of CDD programme in selected districts with RSPN.

To conclude the the session, Mr. Shoaib Sultan Khan invited the the Chief Guest of the event Mir Hazar Khan Bijarani, Minister for Planning and Development Department, GoS, to given his valuable remarks.. Mr. Bijarani said that UCBPRP is a benchmark programme of the present Government of Sindh and that the partnership with RSPs clearly shows that community-driven development can bring positive and sustainable benefits for the poor households.. He also praised the participation of the European Union and the Rural Support Programmes Network in the SUCCESS Programme which is based on GOS's UCBPRP. Key feature of both programmes is that they reach out to the household level and mobilise the households into their own organisations. Mr. Bijarani said that more such programmes should be initiated as they can certainly contribute to better the lives of the poor. He assured that UCBPRP extension will be steered effectively by the Planning and Development Department to attain its objectives in the six districts, namely Umerkot, Sanghar, Mirpur Khas, Khairpur, Badin and Thatta, especially in the scenario when the newly elected local governments are about to function and hope that this would this would strengthen democracy at the grassroots level.

“Fundamentally, any society in any country cannot achieve development until the people themselves participate, and play their roles”, said Mr. Bijarani. He highly appreciated women’s participation in the LSO Convention. Mr. Bijarani concluded by saying that if we continue to hold the assumption that the government will do everything then we will not achieve our objectives. As Shoaib sahib knows, government has certain limitations. Therefore, he urged the LSO participants to keep doing the work they are doing for improving poor people’s lives and livelihoods and make extra efforts to for networking and partnerships with local authorities.



Minister Planning and Development, GoS, Mir Hazar Khan Bijarani, Chief Guest at the Convention, giving speech

Session III: Experience of the Community Institutions (COs/VOs/LSOs) in Creating Linkages with Government and other Stakeholders

The last session of the convention was moderated by Dr. Abdur Rehman Cheema who outlined the objective of the session, which was to recognise the value and contribution of Community Institutions (CO/VO/LSOs) in complementing and supplementing the Government and other development stakeholders. The panellists for the session included, Ms. Rehana Ghulam Ali Memon, Secretary (Development), Planning and Development, GoS, Dr. Shehla Zaidi, Associate Professor, Women and Child Health Division, Aga Khan University, Dr. Sono Khangarani, Member Board of Directors TRDP, and Ms. Shandana Khan, Chief Executive Officer RSPN.



Panellists for Session III: Experience of the Community Institutions (COs/VOs/LSOs) in Creating Linkages with Government and other Stakeholders

This session included presentations by four LSOs. First was LSO Naseerabad, from district Jaffarabad, Balochistan, which presented on improving accountability to education. The LSO was formed in 2013 by the Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP). This was followed by a presentation on extending immunisation by LSO Paras, from district Tharparkar, Sindh. The LSO was established in 2010 by the Thardeep Rural Development Programme (TRDP).. The LSO shared its experiences and activities that they have undertaken since its establishment.

The LSO Dilawar Hussain, from district Mirpurkhas, Sindh, presented on the Water, Immunisation, Sanitation and Education (WISE) that they have implemented with the support of the National Rural Support Programme (NRSP). The LSO was established in 2013 by NRSP. The LSO has conducted awareness sessions on safe drinking water, has held regular meetings with district health department regarding immunisation, and has provided vaccinations to women and children. LSO also conducted school enrolment campaigns.

The last presentation was by LSO Garho, district Thatta, Sindh, on preparedness for disaster risk reduction. The LSO was established in 2012 NRSP. The LSO shared the activities they have conducted and the rehabilitation services they have carried out in cases of natural disasters. LSO maintains regular contact with local administration during the Monsoon season when chances of flooding are high.

After the presentations, the session panellists gave brief remarks. Dr. Shehla Zaidi, Associate Professor, Women and Child Health Division, Aga Khan University, greatly appreciated the efforts being done by various organisations to provide facilities to people raise awareness in community and create demand, especially in the social sectors.

Dr. Sono Khangarani, Member Board of Directors TRDP, giving remarks, said that the capacity of LSOs is increasing, and so is their self-dependence and sustainability along with increase in state service and responsibility, and awareness among people. He said that when such a mechanism exists, there is no difficulty to do any work.

Ms. Rehana Ghulam Ali Memon, Secretary (Development), Planning and Development, GoS, the Session Chair congratulated on behalf of ACS for arranging the LSO Convention. Ms. Memon said that it was a wonderful programme to showcase achievements of Community Institutions (COs/VOs/LSOs). The government has realised how important communities are and the impact of the effort is not visible unless the communities have ownership. The demand generation is from the communities. She said that community development programme where the government provided funds to CO/VO/LSOs to start their own micro projects have been very successful. Ms. Memon concluded by saying that in face of climate change, the country is likely to face more disasters there more attention needs to be paid to community based disaster preparedness.

After the remarks by panellists, a shield-distribution ceremony was held where the notable guests handed shields to the representatives of LSOs who had made presentations at the Convention.

To conclude the LSO Convention 2016, Ms. Shandana Khan, CEO RSPN, gave vote of thanks. Ms. Khan thanked the donors and the government representatives for attending the Convention. She especially appreciated representatives from provincial governments, and thanked them for taking interest in contributing to and collaborating with RSPs for the economic empowerment of rural poor, especially of women. Ms. Khan lauded and thanked the EU for working with the RSPs. She also mentioned the government of Afghanistan is also interested to visit Pakistan to see how government and RSPs are working together for the benefit of the poor people. Ms. Khan concluded her remarks by saying that “the key to sustainability is commitment.”



Ms. Rehana Ghulam Ali Memon, Secretary (Development), Planning and Development, GoS, presenting award to LSO Miani

SUCCESS Programme is based on the Rural Support Programmes' (RSPs) social mobilisation approach to Community-Driven Development (CDD). Social Mobilisation centers around the belief that poor people have an innate potential to help themselves; that they can better manage their limited resources if they organise and are provided technical and financial support. The RSPs under the SUCCESS Programme provide social guidance, as well as technical and financial assistance to the rural poor in Sindh.

SUCCESS is a six-year long (2015-2021) programme funded by the European Union (EU) and implemented by Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN), National Rural Support Programme (NRSP), Sindh Rural Support Organisation (SRSO), and Thardeep Rural Development Programme (TRDP) in eight districts of Sindh, namely: Kambar Shahdadkot, Larkana, Dadu, Jamshoro, Matiari, Sujawal, Tando Allahyar, and Tando Muhammad Khan.



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